

**§ 131E-76. Definitions.**

As used in this article, unless otherwise specified:

- (1) "Commission" means the North Carolina Medical Care Commission.
- (1a) "Critical access hospital" means a hospital which has been designated as a critical access hospital by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Research, Demonstrations and Rural Health Development. To be designated as a critical access hospital under this subdivision, the hospital must be certified as a critical access hospital pursuant to 42 CFR Part 485 Subpart F. The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Research, Demonstrations, and Rural Health Development may designate a hospital located in a Metropolitan Statistical Area as a rural hospital for the purposes of the critical access hospital program if the hospital is located in a county with twenty-five percent (25%) or more rural residents as defined by the most recent United States decennial census.
- (1b) through (1d) Reserved for future codification purposes.
- (1e) "Gastrointestinal endoscopy room" means a room used for the performance of procedures that require the insertion of a flexible endoscope into a gastrointestinal orifice to visualize the gastrointestinal lining and adjacent organs for diagnostic or therapeutic purposes.
- (2) "Governing body" means the Board of Trustees, Board of Directors, partnership, corporation, association, person or group of persons who maintain and control the hospital. The governing body may or may not be the owner of the properties in which the hospital services are provided.
- (3) "Hospital" means any facility (i) that has an organized medical staff and is designed, used, and operated to provide health care, diagnostic and therapeutic services, and continuous nursing care primarily to inpatients where such care and services are rendered under the supervision and direction of physicians licensed under Chapter 90 of the General Statutes, Article 1, to two or more persons over a period in excess of 24 hours or (ii) designated as a rural emergency hospital by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) as defined under 42 C.F.R. § 424.575 or under section 125 of Division CC of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, Public Law 116-260. The term includes facilities for the diagnosis and treatment of disorders within the scope of specific health specialties. The term does not include private mental facilities licensed under Article 2 of Chapter 122C of the General Statutes, nursing homes licensed under G.S. 131E-102, adult care homes licensed under Part 1 of Article 1 of Chapter 131D of the General Statutes, and any outpatient department including a portion of a hospital operated as an outpatient department, on or off of the hospital's main campus, that is operated under the hospital's control or ownership and is classified as Business Occupancy by the Life Safety Code of the National Fire Protection Association as referenced under 42 C.F.R. § 482.41. Provided, however, if the Business Occupancy outpatient location is to be operated within 30 feet of any hospital facility, or any portion thereof, which is classified as Health Care Occupancy or Ambulatory Health Care Occupancy under the Life Safety Code of the National Fire Protection Association, the hospital shall provide plans and specifications to the Department for review and approval as required for hospital construction or renovations in a manner described by the Department.

- (4) "Infirmary" means a unit of a school, or similar educational institution, which has the primary purpose to provide limited short-term health and nursing services to its students.
- (5) "Medical review committee" means any of the following committees formed for the purpose of evaluating the quality, cost of, or necessity for hospitalization or health care, including medical staff credentialing:
  - a. A committee of a state or local professional society.
  - b. A committee of a medical staff of a hospital.
  - c. A committee of a hospital or hospital system, if created by the governing board or medical staff of the hospital or system or operating under written procedures adopted by the governing board or medical staff of the hospital or system.
  - d. A committee of a peer review corporation or organization.
- (6) Renumbered.
- (6a) "Operating room" means a room used for the performance of surgical procedures requiring one or more incisions and that is required to comply with all applicable licensure codes and standards for an operating room.
- (7) "Rural hospital network" means an alliance of members that shall include at least one critical access hospital and one other hospital. To qualify as a rural hospital network, the critical access hospital must submit a comprehensive, written memorandum of understanding to the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Research, Demonstrations and Rural Health Development, for the Department's approval. The memorandum of understanding must include provisions for patient referral and transfer, a plan for network-wide emergency services, and a plan for sharing patient information and services between hospital members including medical staff credentialing, risk management, quality assurance, and peer review. (1947, c. 933, s. 6; 1949, c. 920, s. 1; 1955, c. 369; 1961, c. 51, s. 1; 1973, c. 476, s. 152; 1983, c. 775, s. 1; 1985, c. 589, s. 41; 1993, c. 321, s. 245; 1995, c. 535, s. 20; 1997-443, s. 11A.118(a); 2004-149, ss. 1.1, 2.4; 2004-199, s. 49; 2005-346, ss. 1, 2; 2009-462, s. 4(j); 2009-487, s. 4(a); 2023-134, s. 9F.11(a).)